

Assembly Bill No. 1971

CHAPTER 220

An act to amend Section 27454 of the Vehicle Code, relating to vehicles.

[Approved by Governor August 1, 2008. Filed with
Secretary of State August 1, 2008.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1971, Portantino. Vehicles: studded pneumatic tires.

Existing law prohibits a tire on a vehicle upon a highway from having on its periphery any block, stud, flange, cleat, ridge, bead, or other protuberance of metal or wood that projects beyond the tread of the traction surface of the tire. The prohibition does not apply to pneumatic tires containing specified metal-type studs that are inserted or constructed to meet prescribed conditions during a specified time period each year. Violation of these provisions is a crime.

This bill would, additionally, exempt from the prohibition pneumatic tires with retractable metal-type studs and would allow the use of these pneumatic tires outside the specified time period if their studs are retracted. The bill would prohibit a tire with retractable metal-type studs on a vehicle from being worn to a point at which the studs protrude beyond the tire tread when retracted. By expanding the definition of an existing crime, this bill would impose a state-mandated local program.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that no reimbursement is required by this act for a specified reason.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 27454 of the Vehicle Code is amended to read:

27454. A tire on a vehicle upon a highway shall not have on its periphery any block, stud, flange, cleat, ridge, bead, or any other protuberance of metal or wood that projects beyond the tread of the traction surface of the tire.

This section does not apply to any of the following:

- (a) Tire traction devices of reasonable size used to prevent skidding when upon wet surfaces or when upon snow or ice.
- (b) Pneumatic tires that have embedded therein wire not to exceed 0.075 of an inch in diameter and that are constructed so that under no conditions will the percentage of metal in contact with the roadway exceed 5 percent of the total tire area in contact with the roadway, except that during the first

1,000 miles of use or operation of the tire, the metal in contact with the roadway may exceed 5 percent of the tire area in contact with the roadway, but shall in no event exceed 20 percent of the area.

(c) Vehicles operated upon unimproved roadways when necessary in the construction or repair of highways.

(d) Traction engines or tractors when operated under the conditions of a permit first obtained from the Department of Transportation.

(e) (1) Pneumatic tires containing metal-type studs of tungsten carbide or other suitable material that are inserted or constructed so that under no condition will the number of studs or the percentage of metal in contact with the roadway exceed 3 percent of the total tire area in contact with the roadway, between November 1 and April 30 of each year. A vehicle may be equipped year-round with tires that have studs that retract pneumatically or mechanically when not in use, if the studs are retracted between May 1 and October 31 of each year. A tire on a vehicle shall not be worn to a point at which the studs protrude beyond the tire tread when retracted.

(2) The commissioner, after consultation with the Department of Transportation, may extend the period during which the studded pneumatic tires may be used with studs deployed or inserted in areas of the state for the protection of the public because of adverse weather conditions.

(f) Pneumatic tires used on an authorized emergency vehicle, as defined in Section 165, containing metal-type studs of tungsten carbide or other suitable material, if the studs are inserted or constructed so that under no conditions will the number of studs or the percentage of metal in contact with the roadway exceed 3 percent of the total tire area in contact with the roadway. Notwithstanding subdivision (e), authorized emergency vehicles are permitted the unrestricted use of studded pneumatic tires throughout the year.

SEC. 2. No reimbursement is required by this act pursuant to Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution because the only costs that may be incurred by a local agency or school district will be incurred because this act creates a new crime or infraction, eliminates a crime or infraction, or changes the penalty for a crime or infraction, within the meaning of Section 17556 of the Government Code, or changes the definition of a crime within the meaning of Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution.